Pam - Africa-West
LIBERIA 240

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS IN LIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT

By GEORGE W. ELLIS, K.C., F.R.G.S.
Formerly Secretary of the American Legation in Monrovia

ELLIS

Reprinted from The Journal of Race Development, Vol. 5,
No. 1, July, 1915

Reprinted from The Journal of Race Development,
Vol. 6, No. 1, July, 1915

POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS IN LIBERIAN DEVELOPMENT

By George W. Ellis, K.C., F.R.G.S., formerly Secretary of the American Legation in Monrovia

The independence of Liberia has been often threatened, and on one or two occasions attempts were actually made to subvert the sovereignty of the nation. But there is more real danger to Liberian nationality and the interests of American citizens in Liberian lands and destiny, than perhaps has ever existed since the planting of the Liberian colony by citizens of the United States.

Writing from London August 10, A.D. 1914, Herbert Temple, European manager of the International News Service said:

> The seizure of Togoland, the German possession on the Gold Coast of Africa, is only the opening gun in a campaign by England that will strip the Teutonic empire of all its colonial possessions. It was learned today that Colonial Secretary Harcourt, Lord Kitchener, the War Secretary and Winston Churchill, head of the admiralty, held a conference last Thursday at which the campaign against the German colonies was carefully mapped out.
>
> The first blow was struck at Togoland, although this was the smallest of the German possessions in Africa, covering only 33,700 square miles. It is very rich in mines.
>
> Not far below it on the west coast is Kamerun. This district covers 190,600 square miles and is very fertile.
>
> On the southeast coast are Great Namaqua and Damara. They contain 317,953 square miles, being the second largest German possessions in Africa. Lying adjacent to the British possessions in South Africa, they will undoubtedly be added to that territory if Germany is overwhelmed in the general European conflict.
>
> German East Africa, on the east coast, is the largest and most important German holding in Africa. It covers 365,644 square miles.
>
> Acquisition of these colonies and their wealth of billions of dollars would establish the commercial supremacy of the British empire beyond question.

Seriousness of the Liberian Situation

In December, 1914, La Marquise de Fontenoy wrote that Liberia had made herself offensive to England and France, by permitting Germany to use Liberian territory as a base of operation; and, in the event the former countries were successful Liberia was to be obliterated as an independent state.

The previous alleged agreements between Great Britain and France to overthrow Liberia and to divide Liberian territory were found to be too difficult to execute against the wishes of both Germany and the United States.

Under date of December 26, A.D. 1914, commenting on the purpose of the Allies concerning the ultimate absorption of Liberia, the *Chicago Tribune* wrote an editorial on "Liberia and the Philippines." The editorial displayed such an amazing lack of familiarity with the Liberian situation that it was thought advisable to supply the facts at some length to the editor, who while acknowledging his thanks said nothing further upon the subject. However, on the point under consideration among other things the editor said:

> La Marquise de Fontenoy, whose resources of inside diplomatic information are exceptionally good, says that the Liberians have been making themselves obnoxious to England and France by permitting the Germans to use their territory as a base for operations. She also reports that Sir Harry Johnston came to Washington six years ago to sound the government as to its attitude toward a possible annexation of Liberia. He was given to understand, the Marquise has heard, that we had no disposition to extend the Monroe doctrine into Africa, and, though sympathetic with the attempt represented by Liberia to establish a Negro republic, would not consider intervention to protect the experiment.

Notwithstanding the constant and most active diplomatic interference on behalf of Liberia, British representatives and nationals in Liberia for years have exhausted every resource of diplomacy to impress Liberia that the United States have abandoned that republic to the wish and will of Great Britain. The evident purpose of such misrepresentations is to so confuse and decrease Liberian

opposition to European absorption as to secure as far as possible important advantages through Liberian consent, under the delusion that it is useless to resist, as a possible basis for embarrassing and ultimately defeating American good offices in trying to prevent the dismemberment and final overthrow of the nation, and to which Liberia could be represented in one aspect and then another to have already and willingly consented.

That the Liberian situation warrants the most active and vigorous action on the part of the people and government of the United States in the event that the Allies win in Europe —if Liberia and American property interests therein are to be protected and preserved—is further disclosed in an able and scholarly address by Dr. Frederick Starr, professor of anthropology of the University of Chicago, at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, February 12, A.D. 1915, and from which the following striking and graphic paragraph is quoted as being in point:

> Well the great war now threatens the Liberian republic. In the paper the other morning, we read that the Allies claim Liberia has infringed neutrality. Think of that. Liberia has infringed neutrality! How? Why, there is a German cable, that runs from Monrovia across to South America, and the Allies say that that cable has been used to the advantage of Germany in the present war, and Liberia must be dealt with, and seriously. Do you know that there is also a wireless station at Monrovia? It belongs to France. The German cable connects with South America and how it is going to connect with anything else under the present conditions is inconceivable; but the wireless station, up there on the hill at Monrovia, is in direct connection with a chain of wireless stations that covers the whole of the vast French Empire in Africa. Whether messages sent by German cable can be used is doubtful, but it is absolutely certain that messages can be sent today anywhere by that French wireless. It may be true that Liberia is unable to prevent misuse of the cable or the wireless; but the outcry of the Allies is a mere excuse for putting through the final division of the country. The great chance for the Allies to deal harshly with the black republic and to rend jacket and trousers, leaving half of each in the hands of France and England, has come.

Professor Starr has very vividly stated the facts. Should the Allies win in the present war, in dividing the German African colonies between England and France, with Ger-

many eliminated from the African equation, it seems now so easy and convenient to dispose of Liberia as announced at the same time. The prospect of this new and possible Liberian situation has called to the front, not only Liberia's friends throughout the United States, but the old intrepid American Colonization Society, to save Liberia from destruction as a nation and to secure the lost rights of American citizens in Liberian lands through past European territorial aggression.

American Rights in Liberia

Both in America and in Europe many people know in a general way that Liberia was founded by citizens of the United States, but aside from the political and moral considerations involved, only a few people understand the actual facts and the basis and real quality of American interests in Liberia. Briefly, the interest of the United States in Liberia rests upon the solid foundations of property rights acquired by the American Colonization Society to each and every alternate lot, section or mile of unsold land within the past and present Liberian domain.

In 1846 when the American Colonization Society decided to withdraw its active political jurisdiction from Liberia, in order to facilitate the settlement of certain Liberian international problems, an Agreement was proposed and subsequently made and entered into by the Society and Liberia in 1847, with the following and now far-reaching and significant clause:

> The government shall allow to emigrants the quantity of land heretofore allowed them by existing regulations, out of any unoccupied or unsold lands; every alternate lot, or farm, or section, or square mile or miles, shall be left unsold, to be assigned to emigrants.

Under this provision it was the intention and purpose of the American Colonization Society to reserve the title to every alternate unsold lot or section in Liberia not only for the location of emigrants from the United States, but more particularly as a precautionary measure to protect

Liberian territory against the future aggressions of foreign powers. By the same Agreement, in addition to reserving property rights in Liberian territories and lands, the American Colonization Society reserved equally and jointly with Liberia the political sovereignty of the nation. So that any taking of Liberian territory, past or future, is a positive infringement of American rights. When these facts are generally known by the people of the United States the independence of Liberia will not only be secure, but European powers will find it exceedingly difficult to hold Liberian lands already wrongfully obtained.

Renewed Interest in Liberia

Although at different times, it is alleged that France and Great Britain have seized and taken valuable American and Liberian lands under duress, coercion and first one pretext and then another; and, notwithstanding for many years the American Colonization Society has not chosen to stand fully upon its political and property rights in Liberia; the announcement in Europe that in the remapping of Africa after the present European war, that Liberia is to be destroyed, renews American interest in the Liberian republic and has aroused the American Colonization Society as it perhaps has not been stirred in a half century.

At the annual meeting of the Society on January 19, A.D. 1915, in Washington, D. C., it was decided not only to save Liberia of any future territorial loss, but to take such active steps as may be necessary to reopen Liberian boundary disputes, with the view of recovering American and Liberian lands transferred to either Great Britain or France without the consent and concurrence of the American Colonization Society.

It was further decided to have a Commission to represent the Society, investigate the whole Liberian situation and make recommendations for proper methods of final procedure. Within the scope of this Commission will come all those questions attending the alleged alienation of sovereignty and property of the American Colonization Society,

together with the right of Liberia to cede under duress or otherwise, or of France and Great Britain to acquire and annex territories of the Society without its consent, with the numerous other international questions that must arise.

President H. L. Johnson, K.C., in his annual address, summed up the important issues raised for consideration in these positive words:

> The right or authority of Liberia, under duress or otherwise, without our sanction, to cede or of Great Britain and France to annex territory in Liberia belonging to and owned by the American Colonization Society must be determined by this corporation, and any and all equities restored through the diplomatic agencies of the nations involved.

Natural Resources of Liberia

In the previous article under the subject of "Sociological Appraisement of Liberian Resources" attention was called to some of the economic reasons for the deep anxiety to get possession of Liberia on account of her great wealth in mines, rubber, coffee, and her rich and variegated fauna; in this article it is intended to consider the palm industry, kola nut, calabar bean, ivory, cotton, lumber, and sugar cane. Owing to the number of subjects included it is to be regretted that each of them cannot be given the consideration which their importance deserves. Enough is to be given, however, to throw additional light upon the great natural wealth of Liberian resources.

LIBERIAN PALM TREE CULTURE

In Liberia there are a number of interesting species of the genus palm, but the more important are the fan palm (borassus), the raphia or bamboo palm, the cocoanut palm, and the oil palm, referred to by scientists as the *Elaeis Guineensis*. The oil palm is perhaps the greatest commercial asset in West Africa. To this palm the African has long appealed for food, clothing, shelter, furniture, utensils, tools, weapons, ornaments, medicines and intoxicating beverages. The Egyptians used the wine of this tree, secured from the cabbage, in their most expensive processes

in embalming the dead. Some of the earliest exportations of palm oil were made from Liberia.

Characteristic of the general family the oil palm is an evergreen and is so hardy as to stand unimpaired the intense heat from the burning of bush clearings on the farms. Devoid of pith, bark or branches, its cylindrical trunk often attains a height from 40 to 50 feet. Its body is marked by the scars of decayed pinnate leaves, discarded in its earlier growth. Its footstalks are armed with stout hooked spikes. The summit is crowned by a cluster of pinnate leaves in the center of which is a bud, commonly called the cabbage. This cabbage may be eaten and from it is secured a wine, sweet when fresh and increasing with age in intoxicating power.

Of this species known as the royal palm there are four well defined varieties, and yet my attention has been called to at least seven others. These varieties flourish best in warm, moist, loamy soil. By the animals who feed on the fruit at the trees, the seed are scattered through the hinterland forest where they germinate. When brought under cultivation they may be planted in fields recently utilized for some other product by dropping the seed and covering them or by transplanting young healthy trees.

Although the oil palms are hardy, yet when attacked by the beetle-grub they are stunted in growth and production. Most of them bear abundantly at a height of from 10 to 12 feet. They have been known to begin at 4 feet. But the best results are secured by planting the trees 14 or 20 feet apart—20 feet preferred—trimmed twice a year and well supplied with water.

The oil palm fruit consists of so many drupes or nuts clustered in a bunch or head. Among the varieties of the oil palm fruit, producing a good quantity and per cent of oil, may be mentioned eight varieties: one brick red, one white streaked with black, one red with a tinge of yellow, two reds streaked with black, and three reddish black, and ranging in oil producing qualities from 11.2 to 28 per cent. Besides these there are three other varieties: The porcupine oil palm, named after the long spikes in the bunches which

protect the drupe or fruit; the broom oil palm which supplies the best material for brooms; and a variety whose fruit has no seed and which produces more than 50 per cent of oil. Most of these varieties may now be found in Liberia and all of them would flourish there under proper cultivation.

Oil palm productivity

The oil palm is not only hardy but very productive when properly cultivated in suitable soil. Bearing for a number of years it yields a crop twice a year, during the drys between November and March when the supply is moderate, and in the rains between June and October, when production is very large. All the trees do not bear at the same time, so that there is something of a continual crop throughout the year.

To secure the best results trees should be trimmed twice a year. Experience discloses that the per cent of oil produced depends upon a combination of circumstances: (1) The nature of the soil; (2) the cultivation of the trees; (3) the time gathered; (4) the methods of manufacture. The harvest secured in the March quarter is said to have a greater oil producing power than at other times. The value of trimming the trees is very patent; it removes the pressure of the footstalks from the bunches, allowing both bunch and fruit to grow larger, and at the same time saves sap and vitality that would otherwise be consumed by the trimmed stalks.

Ordinarily a tree will bear from four to ten bunches of fruit a season, and a well trimmed tree will average as much as 40 pounds. Five gallons of fruit will yield one-half gallon of oil. But with wasteful methods of manufacture 30 to 35 pounds of fruit are required to produce this same amount. So that ordinarily it requires 120 bunches to secure 6 gallons of oil. Planted 14 feet apart an acre of ground would contain 222 trees. If on an average each tree produced 35 instead of 40 pounds of oil a season, one acre would produce 7770 pounds, or a little less than 3½

tons. And at $105.60 a ton, the average price of Liberian palm oil in Europe, an acre would realize at least $374.60, and 10 acres would realize something like $3746. Commercially a ton is equal 300 gallons and a box of palm kernels is 40 pounds.

Methods of oil manufacture

The different methods of oil manufacture in Liberia and throughout West Africa vary in detail, yet essentially they all involve three fundamental stages: (1) The separation of the nut from the receme or head; (2) the separation of the pericarp or pulp from the seed; and (3) the separation of the oil from the pericarp.

There are two methods of separating the nuts from the bunches. After cutting them from the trees the bunches are allowed to remain as cut, from three to ten days when they are either cut off or picked out with the hands. When the nuts are very ripe they will fall out of the heads themselves.

In separating the pulp from the seed the nuts are either placed in a mortar and beaten with pestles or in a rock-lined excavation prepared in the earth, or they are buried from 10 to 30 days or more, covered with leaves and dirt, until fermentation has set in, when they are taken up and the pulp and oil are easily separated from the seed with the hands.

In the third stage in all the processes the oil is expressed from the pulp either by being boiled in large kettles—the seed having been removed—and skimmed off during the boilings; or by placing the pulp in troughs at an angle of about 45° and the oil expressed herefrom by the application of hot stones, and which runs into a receptacle at the lower end of the trough.

What is much needed in Liberia is a machine for separating the pulp from the seed and expressing the oil from the pulp. I understand that a palm oil machine has been invented by Mr. Esuman Gwina, by which the pulp is

separated from the seed, realizing in the process the first quality of palm oil. And further, by the use of this machine, one industrious man can easily prepare 25 gallons of pure oil in six or eight hours.

Palm oil in Liberian export trade

In Liberia coffee was first and began to decline in rank in exportation about 1895–96 and continued until now when it is fourth in export importance. Piassava, entering the markets in 1890, rapidly rose to first place in Liberian export trade and then receded to second where it still remains. But owing to the depression in prices in both of these industries, palm oil, on account of its larger profits, received in recent years more and more attention until now it is the chief article of Liberian exportation.

For the year 1908 Liberia exported 1,657,228 gallons of palm oil for which $350,193 were received, which for the same time is $195,263 more than were received for coffee, $163,903 more than for palm kernels, and $146,965 more than were received for piassava, these being the four principal Liberian export articles.

The largest Liberian exports of palm oil are from Basa and the Kru coasts. The local price is 25 cents per gallon. The present price commanded in Europe is much higher and is often above $105.60 per ton. The highest price commanded by any palm oil is by the "bleached," $136.80 per ton under normal conditions. With the proper methods of preparation Liberian palm oil might easily be raised to the first grade, commanding the first and highest price.

Social utility of palm oil

When properly made palm oil consists mainly of what is called tripalmitine, a compound of palmitic acid and glycerine, and trioleine, a compound of oleic acid and glycerine, with a predominance of tripalmitine.

This oil is used by the Africans for lighting, cooking, and soap-making. Plain or mixed with maize-porridge, palm

oil is good for excessive nausea if caused by tartar emetic or any other medicine.

Its fine body, delicate aroma and ready power of bleaching, render it invaluable in common and the most delicate soaps; and the superiority of the fine French toilet soaps are said to be due to the extensive use of this oil.

On account of its palmitic acid it finds large use in the candle-making industry. In South Wales and elsewhere it finds large application in the manufacture of tin plates, in preventing the heated iron from oxidation until it is bathed in melted tin.

By a process of extreme high temperature, called saponification, there may be secured a solid fatty acid, palmitic acid, oleic acid, and glycerine. The solid fats are largely used for candle-making; oleic acid for lubricating such other purposes as might be fulfilled by olive oil; and the glycerine is well known to be used in medicine and surgery and in the manufacture of explosives.

American manufacturers and importers of palm oil would find great favor in the Republic of Liberia, whose chief export is palm oil. All classes of the Liberian population show a decided preference for American cotton goods, shoes, and provisions; and much larger quantities of palm oil, coffee, piassava, and palm kernels would be exported, were it possible directly to secure American goods in exchange.

LIBERIAN PIASSAVA INDUSTRY

Piassava was first discovered about 1889 by J. H. Hughes of Grand Basa, Liberia, and was introduced to the commercial world in 1890. The value of this product was immediately appreciated in Europe and for some years commanded the high price from $288 to $336 per ton. And just as the settlements in Montserrado County flourished from the coffee industry, which a little later began to decline, Grand Basa from piassava assumed the primacy in Liberian export trade and became the headquarters for the piassava industry on the West Coast of Africa.

The large profits from the sale of this article soon attracted the aboriginal population by the thousands and by 1904 piassava had overtaken coffee in importance and was the chief article of Liberian exportation. The Liberians in large numbers rushed into the production of piassava and for a number of years Liberia was the only country from which piassava was secured. It proved however to be such a well paying industry, that Liberia was finally brought into keen rivalry with the production of piassava from European dependencies in West Africa and fibre-producing countries of South America, which has had the result of forcing the price down from $288 and $336 a ton to at times as low as $48 a ton.

Piassava manufacture

Piassava is a fibre and is secured from what is commonly known as the raphia palm (Raphia vinifera), a member of the general palm family. Indigenous to the country the raphia grows in abundance in Grand Basa County and may be found in every county of the republic. In Liberia this piassava fibre is made from the fronds or branches of the raphia in the following manner. The branches are taken from the tree and cut into the desired lengths and placed in water to remain until all of the substance of the fronds except the fibre has decayed. Where possible they are placed in running water. When sufficiently decayed the cut up branches are beaten until the fibre is free from all extraneous matter. The fibre is then cleaned by being drawn through nails closely driven in a board rack. After being placed in the sun until dry it is then ready for the market.

The profits were so great and the method of preparation so simple—the native Africans easily understanding it—that many who rushed into the piassava industry adopted bad and expediting methods, which left the fibre half cleaned and materially assisted competition from outside quarters in bringing down the price of Liberian piassava. Because of these various methods adopted the merchants divided

piassava products into two classes, the first and second qualities. With these two classes as standards they measure and pay for other grades of piassava in cash or goods at large profits.

Liberian piassava trade

The rapid decline of coffee in the markets was attended by the equally rapid rise of piassava, until the latter was, as in 1904, the chief article of Liberian export trade. But bad methods of preparation and outside competition soon materially reduced the profits of the industry, and quickly following in the wake of coffee, piassava receded from its primacy in Liberian commerce. Under normal conditions local merchants pay in cash from $1\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 cents per pound for piassava and from 2 to $2\frac{1}{2}$ cents in goods, according to quality of piassava product.

During normal economic conditions in Europe the price of iassava fibre in Liverpool is from $62.40 to $84 per ton. It has been as low as $57.60 and as high as $97.20 per ton. These low prices, less than one-fourth of those of former days, have caused the Liberians in recent years to turn more and more to a more lucrative paying industry; so that now piassava ranks second in Liberian export trade. However, notwithstanding the decline in piassava prices, a great deal of this product is still exported.

During the year 1908 Liberia exported 7,339,862 pounds of piassava, receiving in return therefor the sum of $203,228, exceeding the amount received from palm kernels by $7,798 and $38,358 more than were received from coffee exportation—palm kernels and coffee being two of the four principal articles in Liberian export trade.

Commercial uses of piassava

The commercial use of piassava fibre is chiefly for making brushes and brooms, yet it may be used for many other purposes. I am informed that it is used in making baskets, in street-sweeping machines, for cordage, bottoms for chairs, etc.

It might be mentioned here that the raphia produces a nut that has such a hard outer covering that it is commonly called ivory. From this ivory nut the Africans make rings and other articles for decoration and dress. To great advantage they have been seen adorning the heads of native canes.

Piassava is tied up at both ends in bundles from two to three feet long much like our American wheat bundles and shipped to European ports in great quantities. It is remarkable how strong this fibre is and how it resists decay under the most decomposing circumstances and endures the wear and tear of the roughest work. In exchange for American cotton goods and provisions thousands of pounds of this piassava may be had at any Liberian port of entry.

THE PALM KERNEL INDUSTRY

About the beginning of the second quarter of the nineteenth century Liberia was among the first to introduce palm oil to the markets of the great modern states. In 1890 a Liberian was first to commercialize piassava. And in 1850 Liberia was the first to export palm kernels, which have become such a great factor in Liberian and West African international trade. The price of palm kernels in 1905 was $66 a ton in Europe, but the oil expressed from them commanded the high price of $129.60 a ton.

Large quantities of these kernels are exported yearly to Europe and other countries. Under normal conditions the price paid for kernels in the local market is from $1.20 to $1.32 a bushel. It has been noticed as low as $1 a bushel. The price commanded by palm kernels generally in Europe is in the neighborhood of $70.20 for Liberian kernels, and $72 for kernels from further down the West Coast of Africa.

Palm kernels occupy a very important place in Liberian exports. As far back as 1908 Liberia exported 195,490 bushels and eceived the sum of $234,588. This amount is $154,703 less than was received for exported palm oil for the same time; $7798 less than were received from piassava exportation; and $30,560 more than were received for ex-

ported coffee. The chief exports of Liberia are palm oil, piassava, palm kernels, and coffee. In export importance palm oil is first and palm kernels third. Coffee, which for so many years prior to 1896 was first, is now fourth. In the primacy of Liberian exports, piassava succeeded coffee and in turn was displaced by palm oil which still maintains its lead.

Preparation of kernel oil

When palm oil is being made from the palm nut, the outside pulp or pericarp is removed and the kernels laid aside to dry. They are then cracked between two rocks, and the inner kernels are preserved for use and trade. It is estimated that 2 cwt. of nuts produce 56 pounds of kernels. A portable nut-cracking machine is very much needed in Liberia. Generally the shells of the inner palm kernels are used for fuel, yet some of the Africans use them in personal adornment as necklaces, bracelets, etc.

For local consumption the Africans prepare two kinds of oil from the kernel:

(1) The better quality of kernel oil is manufactured by putting a quantity of kernels into a wooden mortar and pounded very finely. By being thoroughly ground on a stone it is made into a fine paste, then mixed with cold water and stirred. The oil rises in white lumps to the surface and after collection is boiled. This oil is of a light straw-color which after several exposures to the sun and dew turns beautifully white. Being wholesome and palatable it is a good substitute for lard. It relieves a cough and in moderation, as an emollient for the skin, is better than shea-butter.

(2) The common kind of kernel oil is obtained by frying the kernels in a pan until a dark oil is extracted, which is strained and kept for dressing the hair or rubbing on the body. To secure more oil from the kernels they are pounded, ground finely and boiled, when the floating oil is skimmed off. This is repeated until all the oil is extracted from the kernels.

PALM WINE MANUFACTURE

Aside from the kernel the wine of the palm is a very important article in African consumption, and may possess an export value when its properties and uses are more thoroughly understood. From the palm cabbage there are two methods of securing what is commonly called palm wine: (1) By felling the tree and inserting a reed in a hole cut in the cabbage and allowing the sap to run into a receptacle; (2) by climbing the tree and inserting a reed into a hole cut in the cabbage as the tree stands.

If the flow is slow it may be increased by the daily application of a lighted torch made of the mid-rib of the palm leaf to the side of the hole nearest to the trunk of the tree; and by cutting off a fresh slice now and again from the charred wound the sap will continue sometimes more than 30 days. Trees with the most luxuriant leaves give more sap than those whose leaves are few.

For the local market this palm wine is prepared in two forms, sweet and dry. In making the sweet wine it is mixed with as much water and after boiling for sometime is allowed to cool. The next morning fresh wine is added and then thoroughly stirred. The boiling causes the wine to retain its sweetness for some time. The dry wine is made pretty much the same way except it is not boiled.

Uses of palm wine

Aside from being used as a beverage palm wine has uses some of which might be mentioned. In making bread it is used for yeast. By the addition of hot water its strength is greatly reduced.

It has great diuretic properties and much greater staying powers. Mixed with a little cayenne pepper it sustains without food the laborer on the farm for many hours.

It is used for vinegar. With alum the goldsmith uses palm wine to clean and renovate his implements. Effective as an insecticide, sprinkled about, it is a powerful and satisfactory disinfectant. It is good for cleaning any foul utensil, and by soaking over night it removes rust of all kinds.

A similar substance and a fine substitute is prepared from the pineapple fruit by separating the skin and the core and squeezing out the juice of the remaining fruit. After straining and boiling one has a splendid beverage. It is sweet and sparkling. It may be used also for making bread as palm wine. Pine apple juice heals sore throat, and makes a tasty vinegar.

Other uses of the palm

The heart or palm cabbage is used as a vegetable. Its extraction kills the tree. A fine mushroom grows on the spot where the trunk decays. The palm cabbage is also used as a lint for dressing wounds, and when dry is used for tinder. The back of the palm stalk is scraped and used as a dressing for wounds.

A few of the leaves beaten and added to water, strained and mixed with maize-porridge, stops diarrhoea. This same compound slightly salted and given to females aids quick parturition.

Ferns on the oil palm made into paste and mixed with oil is good for wounds produced by any sharp instrument. A decoction of the roots is used as a remedy for biliousness and jaundice. The male flower of the palm tree burnt into charcoal is good for and is used for dressing on burns. A poultice of pounded palm leaves mixed with oil is useful generally for dressing wounds.

LIBERIAN KOLA NUT

A very interesting member of the *sterculiaceae* family is the *cola acuminata,* not only found in Liberia, but in many parts from Sierra Leone to the Niger. It was erroneously called *cola vera* by Dr. K. Schumann of Berlin. The Kola tree which produces kola nut is indigenous to Liberia and the nuts are contained in a fruit much on the general order of the cocoa, in that a number of the nuts are contained in a single fruit pod, and in form are shaped something like the horse-chestnut.

The kola nut is not much exported to Europe or America although it is a very important article. It is the basis of

certain brands of cocoa and tonic wines. Among the Africans it is in general use and a comparatively large local trade is carried on in this product in Liberia, conducted chiefly by the former residents of Sierra Leone. The nuts are in two varieties, the red and the white. The Africans eat them raw, and especially they are eaten when on long and tiresome trips. It is said that they relieve the effects of both hunger and thirst, and particularly thirst. At one cent a piece they are sold by retail at the shops of Liberian coast towns. But if bought for export in large quantities they may be secured much cheaper for trade goods in exchange.

Uses of the kola nut

The kola nut, in alkaloids, surpasses any other known fruit. It is very active as a stimulant; it is a nerve tonic of great value; and it is said to remove the stupor of inebriety. Its medicinal properties are found exceedingly valuable in asthma and is used to some extent in the United States. Its alkaloid properties are *colanine* and *caffeine*. In its influence upon the body its effects partake of both coffee and cocoa. As a drug its value is still undetermined.

It has, however, been profitably employed in headaches, sea sickness, and in feebleness of the circulatory and nervous systems. No doubt it has very important medicinal qualities and if it were more widely known in Europe and the United States no doubt a much larger demand would be made for this important Liberian product.

IMPORTANCE OF THE CALABAR BEAN

The calabar bean is the seed of a climbing leguminous plant (*Physostigma venenosum*), and belongs to the suborder of *papilionaceae*, and is said to be nearly allied to what is known as the kidney bean.

The calibar bean is called in Africa the *Ordeal Bean*, and is used by some tribes as indicated as an ordeal test in the trial of certain offences like witchcraft, larceny, and domestic infidelity very much like sassawood. These ordeals con-

stitute a phase of the African's administration of criminal justice.

In brief a person suspected of an offence must admit his guilt or submit to one of the many ordeals. A kind of tea is made from the calabar bean, sassawood, etc., and the suspect is required to drink a large quantity. In case the defendant vomits the tea he is considered innocent; if not he is presumed guilty by African customary law, and the retained poison generally produces death.

The calabar bean is highly poisonous and in foreign countries is used for medicinal purposes. Its effect is just opposite that of the belladonna and is used for contraction of the eye; in tetanus, neuralgia, and rheumatic diseases. It is such a powerful depressant to nervous action that surgeons can only use it in small amounts.

This bean is distributed throughout the Liberian forests in great abundance and contains a supply more than sufficient for the demands of America and Europe. With a wider knowledge of its properties it may find a larger consumption in the field of medicine, where it now ministers to the relief of suffering and afflicted man.

LIBERIAN IVORY TRADE

The virgin forests of Liberia are inhabited by the thousands by two kinds of elephants from which is obtained the Liberian ivory. Thousands of pounds of Liberian ivory are diverted from the export trade of Liberia on account of the abnormal conditions obtaining so long in the hinterlands.

Within a few days walk from Cape Mount, the aboriginals report a small species of elephant from which they obtain the small ivories, and then a very large elephant with those splendid ivories ranging from 60 to 100 or more pounds.

Ivories are presented by the chiefs in calling upon one another, the President or other Liberian officials. A small portion of Liberian ivories only are secured by the merchants in the channels of ordinary trade, the rest being obtained by the traders of neighboring colonies. And thus

England and France profited by the disturbed conditions in Liberian hinterlands.

The price paid for ivories on the coast depends very much upon the size of the ivory. Small ivories command in cash from 50 cents to $1 per pound; large ones from $1.50 to as high as $2.40 per pound. When secured in the interior they are purchased by the exchange of goods, making a double profit, one on the goods and another on the ivory when sold abroad.

In recent years there has been a marked tendency on the part of the Liberian government to restore and maintain peace in the interior. The pacification of the interior has gone on with such encouraging success, that the most fractuous tribe now must be hard pressed before it will undertake an intertribal war without first making complaint to the government at Monrovia.

With the pacification of the interior and the permanent policing of the frontier, the aboriginals must more and more devote themselves to the arts of agriculture and trade. And thus it is only a question of time when Liberia will have a large ivory export trade.

GENESIS OF LIBERIAN COTTON CULTURE

At the present time three cotton plants are found in Liberia. One of them is an indigenous species of wild cotton (*Gossypium punctatum*), which yields the cotton manufactured in large quantities in the interior. Probably introduced from South America there is the American cotton (*Gossypium peruvianum*); and the Sea Island cotton (*Gossypium barbadense*), both of which are found throughout and are common to the sea coast belt of Liberia.

Liberia is well adapted in climate and soil to the cultivation of cotton, in fact the whole of Nigeria and Senegambia; and spinning and weaving rapidly spread almost as national industries over Western Africa to the north of the Forest Zone. Whether it is indigenous or otherwise is still an open question. However, we know by the fifteenth century that cotton manufacture had become the leading

industry in West Africa in the countries occupied by the Mandingo, Wolof, Songhai, and Housa peoples. Liberia is the section from which were first exported cotton cloths to Northern and Western Europe.

At the present time cotton manufacture, with some exceptions, is limited to the western part of Liberia to the Vai, Gbalin, Mandingo, Gora, Tomba, and a few of the Kpwesi tribe influenced by Arabian and Mandingan culture. Some Liberian tribes seem to be unfamiliar with cotton manufacture, yet they are acquainted with the plaiting of fibre which in this section and in Africa generally is an ancient art. The coast tribes and especially the Kru peoples are great consumers of cotton cloths, both native and foreign made, and this consumption is increasing among the millions of the Sudan.

Liberian cotton manufacture

In the cotton manufacture which is carried on in this section, it is noted that the cotton spinning is done entirely by the women. The seed are picked out of the wool by hand, the cotton wool dried in the sun, and then corded with a tense bow-string. The swatches of corded cotton-wool are loosely wound on a rounded stick. The spool is held in the left hand while the thread is drawn away by the right hand with a twisting and turning motion, and is wound off on another spool. At one end the right-handed spool is weighted with baked clay, shaped like a wheel, and the spindle is worked with the right hand. The threads are colored by native dyes; blue from indigo, red from camwood, and yellow from the annotto; besides other dyes are secured from the bark of certain indigenous trees and plants. Blue is the color most frequently met, and white cloth is much valued by all Mandinganized tribes for dress.

While the women do the cording and the spinning, the men do the work of weaving. The native cloth is woven in narrow strips not more than 12 inches in width, and then sewed together in the required width for use and sale. Some of the native cloths are of great width and length,

and woven in colors and ornamented with figures and designs are simply magnificent. At a little distance so neatly are they sewed together that they appear to have been woven in a solid piece and are much sought and desired by all who see them.

On account of the fact that the African is unable to compete with European nations in cotton manufacture the native cloth is gradually being driven from the market. The opportunity of American cotton manufacturers with the millions of Africa from Senegal to the Red Sea is such a tempting opportunity through the open door of Liberia, that if not now it must at sometime command the economic attention of the American people.

LIBERIAN SUGAR CANE INDUSTRY

The sugar cane (*saccharum officinarum*) which is cultivated in Liberia must be distinguished from the *sorghum* (*saccharatum*) of the polymorphous *Andropogon* sorghum, whose original home at one time was thought to be in the interior of Africa. The aboriginal home of Liberian sugar cane is said to be in Bengal, India. Here the art of expressing sugar cane juices and concentrating them by the use of fire was first discovered and subsequently extended to most of the nations of antiquity.

Islam carried this art in its wars of conquest toward the East and it is said carried it later into Africa. Whether sugar cane, like rice and horses, was introduced through Islamic influences into the Niger territories through Egypt via Lake Chad and extended into Liberia by the Mandingoes, or whether it reached Liberia via the Mediterranean, passing through the Arabs to the Atlantic islands, and later born by the Portuguese navigators in the fourteenth century to the coast lands of Sierra Leone and Liberia, has not yet been determined. It is pretty certain, however, that sugar cane has existed in Liberia for some centuries and that its soil is most favorable to the cultivation of this plant.

Uses of Liberian sugar cane

A prominent Liberian sugar planter said that with the crude methods obtaining in the cane culture of Liberia six or seven hundred pounds of sugar is secured on an average from an acre of ground, and that the estimated amount realizable per acre is from $40 to $45.

Although the industry is not very highly developed it has in Liberia other uses besides sugar. Most all the syrup manufactured in the country is from Liberian sugar cane. Made very much on the order of sugar it is not cooked quite so much, and is sold locally at 40 cents a gallon. It is put up in 5-gallon tins for sale and must be distinguished from the molasses secured in the manufacture of sugar.

Besides sugar and syrup cane juice is distilled to make rum. In large quantities Liberian rum is sold for $1 to $1.50 per gallon, and in small quantities sells for $2. Cane juice is also used and is good for bad colds. The refuse from the distillery is excellent material for fattening hogs. Few articles are better than magasse for fuel, which when decayed makes good manure.

During the Civil War Liberia shipped sugar to the United States in considerable quantities. And with the development of Liberian resources and the revival of American interest in Liberia, the cane industry will again occupy an important place in the life of the Liberian people.

LIBERIAN PEPPER RESOURCES

In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries Europeans found pepper among the Negroes on the Grain Coast in Liberia. The first kind of pepper discovered in Liberia was called *grains of Paradise*, and from the presence of which the Liberian coast was introduced to Europe as the Grain Coast.

From a kindred species these *grains of Paradise* are sometimes known as *Cardamoms;* but are better known as *malagueta* or *maniguette* pepper, perhaps it is thought from the fact that one time Malaga was the great center for the pepper trade. The seed of this pepper belongs to a species of *Amomum*, known among botanists as *Aframomum mele-*

gueta, a plant related to the banana and belonging to the zingiberaceous (ginger) order. This Amomum is frequently seen in the forest belt from Sierra Leone through Liberia to the East Coast. The description of this plant is omitted though very interesting.

Another plant found in Liberia is closely related to an Indian kind and is noticed in two species: *Piper subpeltatum* and *Piper guineense*. They grow wild in the Liberian coast forest and in a belt across the continent to the *Bahr-al-Ghazal* region of the Nile. In Liberian trade they are known as Ashanti pepper. It is said that the Normans brought these peppers back to Dieppe and Rouen as early as 1364.

And still another pepper is found in Liberia in the fruits of *Xylopia Aethiopica*, a tree which grows from 30 to 60 feet high. Pepper from this fruit is known by the various names Africa, Guinea, or Negro. From this fruit a tonic is also made. The wood of the tree is very elastic and is used for oars and masts of small boats and crafts.

Reasons for Liberian Preservation

While the vast resources of Liberia in lumber is omitted, embracing the rarest woods in peach, cherry, whistmore, black and white gum, camwood, walnut, mahogany, etc., enough has been given to indicate the great natural wealth of this West African republic. In their development lies a great national destiny for Negro culture and civilization in Africa.

Liberia was a great factor in suppressing the slave trade in West Africa long after it had been declared piracy. For years it afforded the only place and asylum for slaves captured on the high seas by American and European powers. Under the greatest international difficulties for nearly three quarters of a century, with only the diplomatic assistance of the United States, Liberia has maintained a sovereign state against the constant territorial aggression and hostility of Great Britain and France.

Settled upon what was supposed to be a barbarous coast

in an actually unfriendly and hostile environment, a few thousand Americans have formulated and developed a self-governing democracy for black men in the real black belt of the world, holding out to the blacks of all the earth, the highest ideals in political liberty and modern culture.

Through Liberian influence and example the light of Christianity and civilization has shed its rays far into the interior among the pagan and Islamic peoples, inspiring them with nobler ideals and a higher destiny. Thousands of aboriginal Africans have been incorporated into the Liberian body politic, some of them rising in the government to the rank of cabinet ministers, and with today more than half of the children in Liberian schools native Negro Africans.

Such time as Liberia has had from trying to maintain her national existence against the great odds of two of the greatest European powers, she has established a staple and orderly government, capable of administering justice at home and preserving the most cordial relations with all nations with no desire to deprive Liberia of her rich and valuable lands.

Her school houses and her churches attest beyond dispute Liberia's fidelity to the principles of genuine democracy and western culture amid the most trying and discouraging circumstances. Contributing piassava and a number of other articles to international trade Liberian coffee is said to have the most aromatic flavor of the coffees sent to the coffee centers of the world.

Although Sierra Leone has the advantages of the wealth and enterprise of Great Britain, and Liberia has had to struggle alone with two great powers bent upon her territorial and national ruin, yet in the essentials of character, intellect, self-respect she has made considerable progress, and in dignity and self-government it is the most peaceable and the freest Negro government existing at the present time.

For these and numerous other reasons Liberia is entitled to the sympathy and support not only of the people of the United States, but of all the justice and liberty-loving nations of the earth.

The United States and Liberian Intervention

The United States should intervene in behalf of Liberia for many reasons:

Because Great Britain and France have no moral right and justification for absorbing Liberia.

Because the people and Government of the United States founded Liberia and should protect her against unjust and wrongful foreign imposition and aggression.

Because Liberia is fulfilling a national mission in the redemption and civilization of the millions in Africa.

Because the United States has always recognized its duty to protect Liberia in its foreign difficulties and claimed the right to stand sponsor for Liberian interests in the family of nations.

Because the establishment of the Liberian colony by the people and Government of the United States carries with it the moral and natural right to protect the Liberian people from foreign injustice until they are able to protect themselves.

Because Liberia would never have been founded and could not exist a day against Great Britain and France except through the influence and protection of the United States.

Because while the United States may not have done for Liberia all that should have been done, yet she has preserved Liberia until this hour and this splendid service should be continued by the people of the United States in part payment for what Africans have done for America and Americans for two hundred and fifty years without pay.

Because to refuse and neglect to protect Liberia in the approaching crisis is an abandonment of the American policy to stand for right, justice and humanity throughout the world, and constitutes the shirking of a moral and national duty which has always been recognized without regard to political parties.

And finally Liberia should be kept independent as a great field for the future political and economic enterprise of colored Americans, who in time will assume the leadership in the social and political redemption of the darker races.

DATE DUE

JUL 1 '71

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.